

Press Release

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Holiday Gift For Newark Residents: The Right To Speak

A coalition of residents from all parts of the city of Newark will present a referendum petition to the City Clerk on Tuesday, 11 AM at City Hall. The petition calls for the Right To Speak at all regular City Council meetings on any issue.

Currently, Newark residents can only speak to items which are on the agenda, on second reading. Many items are listed on the agenda as "communications", or "resolutions," and residents cannot comment on them. Some items are "late starters", which do not appear on agendas at all, and agendas are not available until 1 or 2 days prior to the meeting.

"People from all parts of Newark signed this petition for the right to speak because it is an essential part of our democracy," said Manuel Lavin, from SPARK.

Joining SPARK in working on this issue were other groups and individuals, among them: the Telephone Tree, the HUD Tenants' Coalition, the NAACP, Raz Baraka, and many others.

Senator Ronald Rice, has meanwhile introduced a bill at the Staet level, which was passed by a vote of 35 to 0, requiring all municipalities to have a section of their meeting for residents to speak. This bill must pass the assembly and be signed by the Governor.